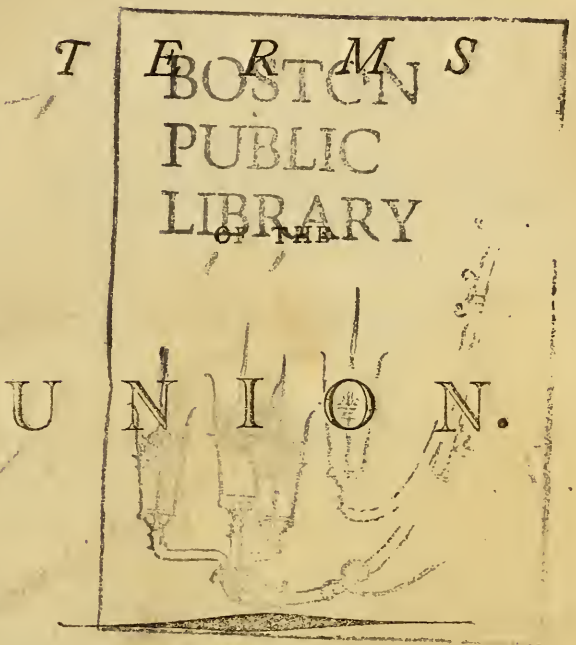
REMARKS

ON THE

TERMS


BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY
OF THE

UNION.

By ARTHUR BROWNE, Esq.

M. P. FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN.

DUBLIN:

1800.

DA949
.5
.B76
1800x

DA949
.5
.B76
1800x

REMARKS, &c.

THE *principle* of Union is now decided. The public approbation or diſapprobation of the *terms* is of infinite conſequence to the peace and proſperity of the country. On the former, ſince the rebellion, I never had but one opinion, though I at firſt improperly conceded it to the opinion of others. On the latter I had many doubts, which, if not entirely diſpelled, have certainly been in a great meaſure removed. Having never had a proper opportunity of explaining my ſentiments thereon, and having been prevented by indiſpoſition and particular circumſtances of fatigue from attending the Houſe in that ſtage of the bill in which I meant to have delivered them, it gives me ſatisfaction to have an

opportunity of doing ſo, by briefly conſidering the various articles to which they relate, and the principal objections to them offered; and proving that my aſſent given to theſe terms is not blindly implicit or ſervilely univerſal.

1. *As to the paucity of Repreſentatives.*

This queſtion ſeems generally to have been diſcuſſed on the extraordinary ſuppoſition that upon every Iriſh queſtion all the Members for Ireland will vote in one way, and all the Engliſh Repreſentatives in another; a ſuppoſition which would render it neceſſary to ſend not only 100 but 557 Members to the Britiſh Parliament from this country, to outvote their opponents. But is this ſuppoſition conſiſtent with reaſon or common ſenſe, or conformable to the fact with reſpect to Scotland?—The hypotheſis is abſurd, if the general advantage of the empire be conſulted, and if to this mere local intereſts be oppoſed, their patrons ought to be defeated, as the Repreſentatives of Yorkſhire lately were by the reſt of England. I own it always appeared to me of little conſequence, whether the number returned was 50, or 100, or 150, provided there were in the united Parliament a ſufficient portion of men acquainted with the local intereſts of each county or great town in Ireland, and empowered to communicate them to the Parliament at large.

As to the Repreſentation of the Lords, it is their own concern: the mode adopted certainly tends to produce the invidious diſtinction of a major and minor Nobility, but perhaps no method could have been deviſed ſo conductive to rendering the election properly independent of the Crown.

The power of creating new Peerages hereafter I cannot approve; but as to the complaint that Iriſh Peers may in England legiſlate as Commoners, it muſt be obſerved that they have always done ſo, and the objection that they may eventually hold the Iriſh purſe is weakened when we conſider that they have always held the Engliſh.

2. *As to the Church.* I think this has been permanently eſtabliſhed beyond the reach of danger, to which in our ſeparate ſtate it was daily expoſed. I am a friend on reaſon and reflection to eſtabliſhments in general, and particularly ſo to that of our rational and moderate Church.

3. *The Catholics.* I have ever been of opinion, that whatever peril in our ſeparate ſtate there might be in admitting them to a full participation of political advantages, there could be none after the Union, and that they then might ſafely ſhare in that due proportion of weight which their numbers in the ordinary courſe of things would poſſeſs in the whole Empire. This opinion I advance with diffidence, becauſe it is oppoſed by many wiſe and

good

good men, for whoſe judgment I have great reſpect, and who think their weight in the ſcale would become diſproportionately great —But be this as it may, I am perſuaded their ſituation will hereafter be leſs irkſome, more comfortable, more open to proper favours, more likely to receive them from a cooler and remoter Parliament, free from local paſſions, than ever it has been—And without determining whether they have or have not a claim to further privileges, I would aſk upon what occaſion the oppoſers of the Union have ſince its diſcuſſion ſhewn any amity to this great body of men, or any inclination to take them into conſideration, or to make any terms for them during its progreſs, or offer any condition in caſe it had been rejected. Nay, in a celebrated addreſs*, were they even once mentioned?

The City of Dublin. Here I own has been my great anxiety: as to the glory and independence of Parliament, I never beheld it; as to the expiration of

* Preſented by Lord Corry.—I muſt here take an opportunity of ſaying, that while I bear no illiberality to the Catholics, I am a ſtaunch Proteſtant, and have been miſrepreſented as to my language about Orange Men. What I ſaid was—'that I was a true friend to the Revolution, that I revered the memory of King William, that I loved the Church of England and the Proteſtant intereſt, but that I diſliked intolerance and bigotry of any kind, and thought the name of Orange Men, though highly reſpectable, and adopted with good intentions, had in ſome inſtances been much abuſed.'

of control upon the Miniſter, I never was witneſs to its exiſtence; but the apprehenſions of reducing thouſands of perſons to poverty, (until I had fully conſidered them) made me recoil with doubt and horror. I am now convinced that thoſe apprehenſions aroſe from exaggerated repreſentations, and falſe alarms. I am convinced that the idea of the metropolis being diſpeopled, when maturely conſidered, is abſurd; and I am fully convinced that thoſe innumerable objects, whoſe daily appearance in the public ſtreets, and ſtill more wretched ſituation in thoſe miſerable habitations which I have explored, makes my heart bleed, have not been reduced to that miſery by the approach of the Union, but that the ſame wretchedneſs has exiſted, as every man's memory may teſtify, for many years paſt. It never can be relieved but by the introduction of manufactures which may be hoped from the Union, or by ſome interpoſition of Government, to which ſurely the improvement of their ſituation ought to be primary and a principal object. To ſupport the bulk of the inhabitants of a country by charitable donations in perpetuum, is as abſurd in policy as impoſſible in fact.

But though I thus deprecate the idea of Dublin ſuffering in the degree apprehended, I fear it will ſuffer, and therefore I wiſh to procure for it compenſation. The compenſation by means of canals, and of the improvement of its port is the moſt obvious, and that which appears to have immediately

offered

offered itſelf both to Government and to the city. As far as is conſiſtent with the general welfare, I conſider the Government as pledged to it. If jobbers, taking advantage of the general good deſign, endeavour to graft improper ſchemes upon it, let them be oppoſed, but let not the City of Dublin ſuffer. But here let me aſk again, as I did with reſpect to the Catholics, where has the City of Dublin met with the friendſhip of the oppoſers of the Union? Have they endeavoured to make terms for her? Was the City or its intereſts ever mentioned in the famous addreſs? Had half the labour which was employed in oppoſing a meaſure (which every man perceived would be carried) been employed in improving its terms, and making conditions for the City of Dublin, in lieu of vain embarraſſment, and proud refuſal to co-operate, how nobly might that City have been compenſated at this moment, which I ſtill truſt and believe it will be. It might then have been made a condition, it will now be, however real the claim, apparently a bounty.

I ſhould be ſorry to be underſtood as extending this complaint to all the opponents of the Union. I know that many good and eminent men amongſt them lament, that their time was not employed (ſtill proteſting againſt the principle,) in modelling the detail, nor can I perceive how improvement of the terms would imply acquieſcence in the meaſure; but the majority has prevailed, and the plan of a late Cabinet Miniſter in another country, has been generally

truſt, will do infinite ſervice to this country in the United Parliament,) powerful, ingenious, and puzzling arguments, enveloped however in ſubtle phraſe and enigmatical period, not well calculated to prove candour, or to carry impreſſion.—But by the greater part the weapon oppoſed has been wit, a bad article of commerce, a poor payer of taxes, and a feeble inſtrument of conviction; but unfortunately for Hibernia, whoſe frequent and favourite produce it is, and luckily for her orators who feed upon it, ſhe has always been fonder of laughing than of thinking.

It is ſaid that this is "an Union of the Parliaments, not of the Nations, and that ſeparate Intereſts, Exchequers, Debts and Revenues, require ſeparate Parliaments."

Theſe words are almoſt a repetition of the language of Lord Haverſham on the Scottiſh Union. He ſaid, "the queſtion was, whether two Nations, having *diſtinct Laws and Intereſts*, could be united into one Kingdom:"* and he prophecied, that from the incongruity of the ingredients of ſuch an Union, it would require a great ſtanding force to

 keep

* He added indeed circumſtances of diverſity not exiſting with us, and which made the Scottiſh Union infinitely more difficult, viz. independent Sovereignties, different forms of Worſhip, Church Government, and Order.

keep it from falling to pieces every moment.*—His queſtion has been anſwered by experience, and his prophecy falſified by the event. In truth it is not ſelf-evident that ſeparate intereſts require ſeparate Parliaments. Intereſts may be ſeparate without being oppoſed; in every incipient Union ſuch diſtinctneſs muſt for a time exiſt; but how does it follow that an united Parliament is incapable of judging on theſe diſtinct, but not contrary intereſts? The truth is, this diſtinctneſs is preſerved for the ſake of Ireland; it was ſo in Scotland. Had not a diſtinct Exchequer, and diſtinct Commiſſioners of the Revenue been preſerved, the grievance, from inferior local exactions and remote redreſs, is evident, and would be intolerable. That each Nation ſhould in the firſt inſtance retain, and then ſeparately diſſolve its own debt, is evident juſtice: the debt of Scotland was *quaſi*, nothing—it was under 400,000 pounds; England paid it, as compenſation for certain burthens undertaken by Scotland for the benefit of England, but which have not been born in the ſame manner by Ireland; the circumſtances are different—the principle is the ſame.

Equalizing Duties and Countervailing Duties operate only as matters of regulation, and in the end

* The Rebellions of Scotland aroſe from the prevalence of Jacobitiſm, not from the averſion to Union. Was the Union mentioned in the year 1745?

end appear to me to produce *in effect* a free trade. It were devoutly to be wiſhed that there was no occaſion for diſtinct Cuſtom-houſes in the two countries—that there was no neceſſity of Countervailing Duties—that Ireland was as Yorkſhire, and St. George's Channel as the Humber; but for ſome years it cannot be ſo, and the difficulty partly ariſes from the different debts and taxes of the two countries, but principally from regard to the intereſts of Ireland, and from fear of their being impaired.

Controverted Elections. It is remarkable that the diſputes about controverted Elections which proceed from the kingdom of Scotland, are much more numerous than thoſe from England; perhaps it is abſtractedly true that the leaſt civilized nation is more inclined, when reſtrained from blows, to cheriſh litigation; and yet we do not hear that Scotland complains of the trouble or expenſe of trying her Elections in London. I will admit, however, that this matter muſt be regulated by the future wiſdom of the united Parliament. To make eternal that which for ever ought to be mutable according to events—to render inflexible that which eſſentially reſts in the will of every Parliament, viz. the determination of the qualifications or eligibility of its own Members*—In ſhort, to make

 the

* No man of ſenſe now condemns the conduct of Parliament on the Middleſex Election; if it be ſaid no lover of freedom approves it, will oppoſition refuſe the teſtimony of Mr. Fox?

the mode of trying controverted Elections an indiſſoluble article of Union, would have been the height of abſurdity.

"*The taxes of the two countries are to become equal, with an increaſing Iriſh debt, while that of England diminiſhes.*" This riddle is ſolved by remembering that as the debt of England decreaſes ſo do her taxes, and that the equality would happen in a ſhorter period without an Union. Surely the framers of theſe enigmas have great contempt for the underſtandings of common men.

Abſentees. Is it conceived, that every man in Ireland can command his purſe, or transfer his property as he may chuſe, or remove to England at his pleaſure? or is it imagined, that when the novelty abates, the whole hundred Members from Ireland will attend Parliament, when the uſually attending portion of Engliſh Repreſentatives doth not amount to one-third of the integral number? Really both theſe wild ſuppoſitions ſeem to have been frequently made, and generally argued upon. Let any man explore the ſtreets, or ſquares, or places of his vicinage, and cooly aſk himſelf how many of their inhabitants will or can leave their abodes? From experience, I think he will be ſurpriſed at the reſult. Edinburgh is well known to me: A more flouriſhing city cannot be found. The Gentry of Scotland reſort to Edinburgh in the winter as their metropolis, becauſe there they find maſters

maſters capable of inſtructing their children in every ſpecies of accompliſhment; becauſe there they find a theatre, aſſemblies, parties of pleaſure and ſociety; becauſe it is the ſeat of the Courts of Juſtice; becauſe literary men and learned inſtitutions there abound. In which of theſe is Dublin deficient, aided alſo by the ſplendour of a Court, to which the metropolis of Scotland is a ſtranger? And is Ireland ſo deſtitute of country gentlemen, as to be ſtripped of the order by the abſence of thirty at a time? Or is there ſuch a charm in living in ſome humble lodging in Weſtminſter, unknown and unconnected in England, as to induce every Eſquire to leave his eſtate and follow in their train?

Tranquillity. It is ſaid the Parliament has worked well, and the country has thriven under it: when—how—at what period? Was it in the laſt century, when from 1630 to 1690, the country was torn aſunder with civil wars? Was it from that period to 1782, during which the kingdom never ceaſed to groan under intolerable and acknowledged grievances, and to threaten the eruption of hidden and concealed fires? Was it from 1789 to the commencement of the laſt Rebellion, while the ſeeds of French anarchy were germinating in a fertile ſoil? Or was it during that horrible commotion, which has ſcarcely yet ſubſided? One little light ſpeck of proſperity appears in the gloomy chaos; but to argue with thoſe who aſſert that the country has thriven

thriven in tranquillity under the paſt order of things, is as impoſſible as to contend with him who declares that day is night, and deſires me to prove the contrary.

Jobs. This vulgar but expreſſive epithet denotes a practice which the Union will probably damp and diſcourage. If, indeed, the patronage of Ireland were to be left in the hands of her hundred Repreſentatives, the evil might encreaſe.—But I truſt and hope that the Government of Ireland, no longer obliged ſo often to ſacrifice propriety to parliamentary intereſt, will ſolely look in every line to the encouragement of merit, to which ſurely in the abſtract it muſt be naturally inclined.

It is ſaid that *the United Parliament of England will be free as to England, ſhackled as to Ireland.* Where, or how? except to tie up its hands from over-taxing or encroaching upon Ireland. Is this a ſubject of complaint?

The number of Iriſh Repreſentatives is diminiſhed—that of Engliſh remains. The argument excites a ſmile: It aſſerts that the Iriſh Repreſentation is unfair, and complains that the Engliſh is not ſo alſo.

Local Legiſlature. It cannot be denied that ſome inconvenience may ariſe from the want of a local Legiſlature, which might more quietly and eaſily attend to the immediate local calls and wants of

petitioning

petitioning manufacturers, debtors, &c. Yet an inconvenience has ariſen from the facility of ſuch applications in loading our ſtatute book with trifling proviſions, and it may be a query whether certain powers might not be veſted in the Privy Council, or ſome other department, ſufficient to anſwer haſty and inferior emergent occaſions.

I come in the laſt place to conſider the undue means by which this meaſure is ſaid to have been carried, and the ſettlement of 1782, which has been ſet up againſt it as a bar. I am one, and I am confident, one of many, who can boldly ſay, if ſuch means have been uſed, we know not of them. The charge in a caſe where proof muſt have been eagerly ſought, reſts entirely on the aſſertion of thoſe who make it. The character of the Chief Governor, whoſe name contrary to every rule of Parliament and every principle of decorum, has been ſo often introduced in the Houſe of Commons, is above their cenſure and above my praiſe. The character of the Miniſter, has with great courteſy of manners too great an intermixture of virtue and proper pride to ſuffer any man to refuſe the acknowledgment, that he is utterly incapable of, and infinitely above ſuch debaſing and unworthy arts. May we not conclude then that theſe ſuſpicions are the offſpring of ſpleen. But if the charge were true, what would follow? That it would be an argument for the Union. If the Parliament were capable of being packed and corrupted, a packed and corrupted Parliament ought not to exiſt.

As

9 3110/89

As to the ſettlement of 1782, I remember it well. It was contemporaneous with my firſt knowledge of Parliament, and the impreſſions proportionably ſtrong. I perfectly agree with thoſe who ſay, that whatever thoughts might ſilently reſide in the minds of certain great men, perſons like myſelf, and indeed the great body of the Nation, had no idea of the probability or neceſſity of further grand alterations. But I cannot conceive that it was the idea of any man, that let events be what they might, that ſettlement was to be eternal and forbad accommodation to any future contingencies.

Such are ſome of the obvious remarks upon the terms of Union, which naturally ſuggeſt themſelves to a plain mind; and which I think ſerve to convince us, that if theſe terms be not altogether as perfect as hope might conceive, they are at leaſt much more ſatisfactory than in the uſual intercourſe of human affairs, reaſon could expect*.

* In the courſe of an extenſive and various Correſpondence, two Letters from ſenſible men, one in Scotland, the other in America, in the progreſs of laſt year, much amuſed me. "I am an enemy," ſaid my nobly allied Scottiſh friend, "to the Union; we," ſays he, "undoubtedly gained in happineſs and wealth, but we ſacrificed our pride. "We," ſaid my Commercial American friend, "are aſtoniſhed at your rejecting the bleſſings of Union; you have ſacrificed riches and comfort to pride."

FINIS.